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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/791,820	03/04/2004	Naoto Watanabe	03500.017940	3654
5514 7590 04/10/2008 FITZPATRICK CELLA HARPER & SCINTO 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA NEW YORK, NY 10112				
EXAMINER				
BEAUCHAINE, MARK J				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3653				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
04/10/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/791,820

Applicant(s)

WATANABE ET AL.

Examiner

MARK J. BEAUCHAINE

Art Unit

3653

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 January 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6, 16 and 17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6, 16 and 17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 04 March 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-4, 6, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Patent Number US 6,494,453 B1 by Yamada et al ("Yamada") in view of Patent Number US 6,494,449 B2 by Tamura et al ("Tamura"). The sheet stacking apparatus disclosed by Yamada comprises tray 2 on which sheets discharged from outlet E2 are stacked (see Figures 1 and 2) and that is movable via controller 100 between a stacking position at which the sheets discharged from the outlet are stacked and a retracted position, and controller 102 that controls movement of said tray. Yamada further discloses sensor SN8 detects the sheets on said second tray wherein the predetermined distance is set to a distance of movement up to just before an output of said sensor changes from a sheet present indication to a sheet absent indication.

Said controller stops descending movement of said second tray when a moving distance of said second tray reaches a predetermined distance, *i.e.*, the distance from sensor SN8 to outlet E2, (column 9, lines 26-33). After the moving distance of said tray reaches the predetermined distance, said controller initiates an ascending movement of

said tray in response to a change of output of said sensor from a sheet present indication to a sheet absent indication and stops the ascending movement in response to a change of the output of said sensor from said indications (column 16, lines 59-64). When the moving distance of said tray reaches the predetermined distance, said controller stops said tray regardless of the output of said sensor (column 18, lines 47-59). Yamada further discloses second sensor SN9 that detects that said tray has descended to reach a lower limit (column 18, lines 32-46).

Yamada fails to disclose the movement of said tray as being controlled based upon the measurement of a time period. Tamura teaches a sheet stacking apparatus comprising movable tray 12 that is controlled by measuring a time period corresponding to a predetermined distance (see Figures 1, 10 and 20; column 7, lines 50-65; column 8, lines 24-41; and column 24, line 65 through column 25, line 5) for the purpose of controlling the acceptance of sheets in said tray. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the tray control configuration of Tamura into the apparatus of Yamada for the purpose of controlling the acceptance of sheets in said tray.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamada in view of Tamura as applied to claim 2 above, and further in view of Patent Number 5,228,679 by Borostyan ("Borostyan"). Yamada/Tamura fails to disclose an ascending movement of tray 2 before the moving distance of said second tray reaches the predetermined distance. Borostyan teaches a sheet stacking apparatus comprising

controller 96 and tray 114 that contains a stack of sheets. Controller 96 initiates an ascending movement of tray 114 before the moving distance of said tray reaches a predetermined distance (column 7, lines 55-69) for the purpose of stationing the upper surface of the stack of sheets at a predetermined location. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the ascending operation of Borostyan into the sheet stacking apparatus of Yamada/Tamura for the purpose of stationing the upper surface of a stack of sheets at a predetermined location.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-6, 16 and 17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

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TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MARK J. BEAUCHAINE whose telephone number is (571)272-6934. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00AM through 5:00PM Mondays through Thursdays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick H. Mackey can be reached on (571)272-6916. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Patrick H. Mackey/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
Unit 3653

mjb